

REMARKS

In the prior Office Action, the Examiner has objected to claims 40 and 74-77 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Examiner also responded in the prior Office Action as follows: rejected claims 12, 68, 69, 71 and 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Chisholm (U.S. Patent No. 5,400,248); rejected claims 1-3, 6-11, 15-21, 23-28, 30-34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46, 50-53, 55-61, 80, 81, 84, and 86-90 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo (U.S. Patent No. 5,974,392) in view of Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,862,223); rejected claims 4, 5, 22, 29, 35, 42-44, 82, and 83 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Walker and Nelson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,797,130); rejected claims 12-14, 62, 64-67, 70, 73, and 79 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Nelson; rejected claims 38, 49, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Walker and Bejar et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,295,439); rejected claims 63 and 78 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Nelson and Walker; rejected claims 47 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Walker and Christensen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,881,230); and rejected claim 85 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Endo in view of Walker and Paiziz (U.S. Patent No. 6,338,042).

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in the pending claims. While Applicants disagree that any of the pending claims are unpatentable over the cited references, Applicants have nonetheless amended the claims in order to expedite prosecution of this application, such that all of the claims are in a form believed to be allowable based on the Examiner's indications of allowable subject matter.

In particular, claims 19-31, 40, 75, 76, and 79 have been canceled, and the subject matter of allowable claims 40, 75 and 76 has been incorporated into independent claims 32, 1 and 12. Specifically, independent claim 32 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of its dependent claim 40, independent claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of its dependent claim 76, and independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 75. Allowable dependent claims 74 and 77 have been rewritten in independent form, incorporating all of the aspects of their parent claim 12.

As such, each of the independent claims 1, 12, 32, 74, and 77 is now believed to be in allowable form, and their dependent claims are each allowable for at least the same reasons as the claims from which they depend. In addition, new independent storage medium claim 91 has been added that recites language similar to that of amended apparatus claim 32, and thus claim 91 and its new dependent claims 92-102 are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 32.

Thus all of the pending claims 1-18, 32-39, 41-74, 77-78, and 80-102 are believed to be in allowable form. In light of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to timely allow all pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 694-4815.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Respectfully submitted,
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